

Advisory Report FAQs

Questions received from BER Assessors during the advisory report webinars held on the 10th, 15th, 17th and 29th of June 2021 regarding the updated advisory report and its associated builder have been answered below.

More information on the advisory report, how to generate an advisory report and its logic and recommendations is available within the **BER Advisory Report Guidance Document** [here](#).

Information Included within the Advisory Report	
Q1	<i>Are the BER assessors' details included on the new report?</i>
	No, the BER assessor's details do not appear on the advisory report. The BER assessor number appears on the accompanying BER certificate. The advisory report contains the BER number and the dwelling address.
Requirements for Issuing the Advisory Report	
Q2	<i>If a homeowner does not care for a detailed advisory report, then can a "draft" report can be used along with the official BER Cert? Will a draft advisory report be acceptable by an auctioneer or legal team? If not, what are the options?</i>
	An official advisory report must be published with every BER certificate in accordance with the BER Scheme and the 2012 Regulations. A draft report will not be acceptable as an official document.
Q3	<i>If a client is just interested in getting a BER as part of the legal requirement for the sale, do you still have to use the advisory builder to meet the minimum requirements? i.e., the minimum upgrade levels.</i>
	Yes, as it is a legal requirement to obtain a BER certificate and advisory report for the sale of a house and the advisory report must meet them minimum potential rating in order to publish the report. Even if the current homeowner isn't interested in the report, it must be made available for prospective buyers.
Generating Draft or Multiple Advisory Reports	
Q4	<i>After the transitional period, will it be possible to generate a draft advisory report without the need to publish a BER?</i>
	Yes, it will remain possible for assessors to generate any number of draft reports prior to publication of the official advisory report. You will be able to save/print these locally and they will have 'draft' written on them. More information is available within the Advisory Report Guidance Document available here
Q5	<i>Can you produce multiple advisory reports with different options?</i>
	There can only be one official advisory report. However, there are a number of options available to allow you to present different packages of upgrades: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Generate draft versions of the advisory report: This allows you to create any number of reports prior to publication. These can be saved or printed locally and will have draft written across them. These can be used to explore different options with your client ahead of publishing the official advisory report. 2. Re-create the advisory report: The official advisory report can be updated and replaced, without the need to re-publish the assessment. This option is available for any advisory report published in DEAP 4 since September 2019. Please refer to Section 3 of the Advisory Report Guidance Document here for a step-by-step step guide on re-creating an advisory report.
Q6	<i>Do you have to 'send to NAS' to generate a draft report? i.e., early design stage for house renovation etc?</i>

	The BER assessment must be at 100% completeness and sent to NAS in order to access the advisory report builder. More information how to generate an advisory report is available within Section 3 of the Advisory Report Guidance Document here .
Re-creating or Editing a Previously Published Advisory Report	
Q7	<i>Is there an option to edit the report after it has been published?</i>
	The official advisory report can be updated and replaced with no cost and without the need to re-publish the assessment. This option is available for any advisory report published in DEAP 4 since September 2019. More information is available within Section 3 the Advisory Report Guidance Document available here .
Q8	<i>Is it possible to update previous advisory report on published BER?</i>
	This facility is in NAS to recreate an advisory report for a previously published BER assessment; however, it can only recreate advisory reports that were published using DEAP 4 since September 2019. Old format advisory reports published using DEAP 3 cannot be recreated in the new format.
Q9	<i>Can you generate and advisory report on a BER published by another assessor?</i>
	Yes, this can be arranged by contacting the BER Helpdesk to request that the BER is imported into your DEAP portal. You should provide proof that you have been engaged by the homeowner e.g., by providing a copy of your letter of engagement.
The Role of the BER Assessor	
Q10	<i>Can you clarify if there are any changes to the role of a BER assessor as an 'advisor' or otherwise as a result of the updating of the advisory report?</i>
	The role and requirements of a BER assessor remains unchanged following the launch of the advisory report. However, the updated advisory report will provide a BER assessor with an additional and more informed tool to better communicate and aid a homeowner's understanding of their BER and the steps they can take to improve it.
Q11	<i>How does the advisory report relate to the heat pump technical assessment and is it intended to replace it? Is the advisory report intended to replace the role of a Technical Advisor?</i>
	The advisory report fulfils the requirements of the BER Scheme and S.I. 243 of 2012, which is separate to the requirements of the Heat Pump grant and associated technical assessments. The role of the Technical Advisor is specific to the application requirements for the Heat Pump Grant applications. The advisory report does not replace the requirement to have a technical assessment carried out on a dwelling, where required for grant purposes.
Q12	<i>Will the advisory report result in more back and forth discussions between the BER assessor and the Homeowner? For example, if I have included a heat pump in their advisory report, however they then indicate to me that are not interested in a heat pump, what would the rating be if I did all the upgrades and excluded the heat pump?</i>
	A BER assessor can consult the homeowner for their input in advance of creating the advisory report, to get their input on particular preferences in relation to upgrade measures e.g. heating systems. Some homeowners may be considering applying for one of SEAI's grant programs for example, which may require them to reach a B2 rating. The advisory report in such instances can provide the homeowner with relevant information on the works they may need to carry out on their home and encourage them to take the next steps with regards to increasing the energy efficiency of their home. Understanding the homeowner's motivation in getting a BER can support the BER assessor in generating the advisory report in the first instance.
Q13	<i>Can we charge more for providing our clients with the updated and more detailed advisory report?</i>
	As per the requirements of the BER Scheme and S.I. 243 of 2012, it is a requirement that all BER assessors provide their clients with both a copy of the BER certificate and advisory report. The charge for the advisory report should be included within the cost of BER works agreed with the client.
Assessor Liability	
Q14	<i>What liabilities lie with the BER assessor with this new advisory report?</i>
	It is not possible to provide detailed, bespoke retrofit advice from the BER inputs alone. There are many factors which need to be considered when determining the suitability and appropriateness

	of various upgrade measures. For this reason, the advisory report is described as a 'first step' to assist homeowners in engaging with a professional to determine suitable upgrades.
Q15	<i>Is there a possibility that that the upgrade stated a B1 and with further professional advice only achieved a B2? What happens in such a scenario?</i>
	The report states ' <i>the improvement in the BER has been estimated [and] is provided as an indicator only</i> '. The advisory report builder makes a number of assumptions when generating the report and the homeowner is made aware of this on last page of the advisory report.
Dwelling Age of Construction	
Q17	<i>Is the year of construction on Page 4 of the advisory report going to be in a range i.e. 1950 to 1966 or specific e.g., 1960?</i>
	The age of construction as entered in the assessment is the age that will be displayed on the advisory report.
Targets within the Advisory Report	
Q18	<i>Does every reason for a BER, (e.g. sale, rental trigger), require an upgrade to a B2 standard? Or is this just in relation to the major renovation option?</i>
	The advisory report builder provides indicators for both minimum and target potential ratings for the improved BER. The minimum and target ratings are dependent on the current rating. You will need to ensure that a sufficient list of measures has been selected within the advisory report builder in order to meet the minimum rating and generate a report. The B2 target is the ideal potential rating for the dwelling. This is aligned with the 'cost optimal' requirement as set out for major renovations in Part L of the Building Regulations and with retrofit targets in the Climate Action Plan. Not every advisory report needs to reach a B2. The advisory report will show recommendations, but they are only provided for information purposes and do not need to be undertaken by the homeowner.
Q19	<i>Can you give an example of how you would upgrade a midfloor, electric heated apartment with one exposed wall from an E rating?</i>
	For some dwelling types, the options for improving the energy performance are limited. For this reason, the minimum uplifts required for publishing the advisory report are quite conservative. The minimum upgrade of an E rated apartment is C3. A C3 could be achieved by, for example, adding IWI, replacing windows, and installing an air-to-air heat pump.
Q20	<i>If the target BER is not achieved, can we still publish the BER?</i>
	Yes, it can still be published. The purpose of target is to set a level of ambition. It is to say to the BER assessor and to the homeowner that if you select a full and extensive list of upgrades for the house, here's what the potential BER could be. You will need to reach the minimum BER target in order to publish the advisory report, however reaching the target BER is not a requirement for publication. More information is available within Section 2 of the Advisory Report Guidance Document available here .
Cost Indicators for Package Measures	
Q21	<i>Will the costings of the proposed works be updated regularly to allow for price increases, inflation, etc?</i>
	It is not possible to provide precise costings based on the BER information alone and for this reason, the costings are presented as a broad range to provide homeowners with an indication of potential costs. The purpose of the indicators is to give a homeowner a sense of what the cost <i>might</i> be. These cost indicators will be reviewed periodically to ensure they are reflective of typical upgrade works.
Q22	<i>How does the advisory report distinguish the cost of wall insulation, if either cavity wall insulation or external wall insulation are being for wall upgrades to reach the required for the target value?</i>
	In an earlier release of this application, the advisory report included recommendations for one of the following - internal wall, external wall and cavity fill. This approach was reviewed to take account of the many houses with mixed wall types and extensions and so, a target U-value is recommended instead as it may be appropriate to meet this target with a combination of insulation solutions. From the information within the BER it is only possible to present a broad range of indicative costs. In the background, the cost calculation is based on an indicative cost per square metre,

	multiplied by the wall area to be upgraded. The actual cost of the wall insulation will need to be determined by the contractor following a survey of the home.
Q23	<i>Is there a payback calculation available for recommended works?</i>
	No
Q24	<i>Are there estimated costings available based on materials only? Or are they inclusive of installation, grants etc?</i>
	Indicators are based on the total cost of an upgrade. Potential grant aid is not included.
Queries Regarding Grant Payments	
Q25	<i>The report mentions that 'Grants are Available'. What if the previous owners had their walls pumped and had received a grant, and now new owners want to do external wall insulation can't get grant because grant is already paid out for that house? The BER assessor will not know this, and the report will say a grant is available.</i>
	A foot note in relation to grant availability is provided on page 2 of the advisory report which states 'A grant for this type of upgrade is available at the time of publication of this report. Grant availability is subject to eligibility criteria and should be checked to see if the works to your own home meet the eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria are subject to change.' It's a matter for the homeowner to confirm the details if the works are eligible for the grant.
HLI (the Heat Loss Indicator)	
Q26	<i>Does the advisory report issue and warnings regarding the Adjusted Infiltration Rate if the HLI is between 2 - 2.3?</i>
	No, the builder will not give a warning when the HLI is between 2-2.3. More information on errors and notices are available in Appendix B of the Advisory Report Guidance Document, available here .
Major Renovation	
Q27	<i>In relation to the "minimum" requirements within the advisory report, there be a warning to the homeowner if one or more of the upgrade measures is external wall insulation and window installation which may bring the rating up the minimum of D1, but which will trigger Part L Major Renovation?</i>
	General information on 'Major Renovation' is provided to the homeowner on Page 2 of the advisory report as follows: <i>Major Renovation is defined in the Building Regulations Part L Technical Guidance Document and means the renovation of a dwelling where more than 25 % of the surface of the dwelling envelope undergoes renovation. Where a dwelling undergoes a major renovation, the energy performance of the whole dwelling should be improved to the cost optimal level by achieving a B2 or by implementing the energy performance improvements as set out in the Building Regulations Part L Technical Guidance Document.</i> This note is presented whenever a fabric upgrade is recommended.
New Builds BERs	
Q28	<i>Does the advisory report apply for new build dwellings? Generally, there shouldn't be many upgrade options for a new build dwelling.</i>
	An advisory report must accompany the BER certificate. However, if the dwelling already has an A-rating, there may be no upgrades recommended. Where this is the case, the advisory report is reduced from 4 pages to 2 pages. An example of which is included at the end of the Advisory Report Training Webinar Presentation Slides available here .
PEF (the Primary Energy Factor)	
Q29	<i>The primary energy value 2.08, could you explain the <u>why</u> of dividing efficiency by this?</i>
	We divide the heating system efficiency by the primary energy factor of the fuel to assist homeowners in comparing heating system efficiencies. This approach takes the fuel used into consideration so that systems can be compared on a like for like basis.
Q30	<i>Does the primary energy conversion factor also apply to heat pumps?</i>
	Yes.
Questions in Relation to Performance Gaps and the use of Non-Default Data	
Q31	<i>The evidence requirements for some items (pumped wall insulation for example) are very onerous. So there seems to be a big risk of advisory reports telling owners that various items</i>

	<i>are "poor", when in fact it's only an absence of evidence that makes it appear poor. The same applies when default age bands must be chosen for extensions where evidence is limited.</i>
	<p>The advisory report reflects what information has been entered into DEAP. It is possible to suppress a recommendation, where you feel the recommendation is not appropriate for the particular dwelling.</p> <p>The information for homeowners on the BER section of the website will be substantially updated to provide more detailed information on the key data points in a BER and the information needed to support non-default entries. This information is provided to assist homeowners in preparing their documentary evidence in advance of their assessment and to assist them in ensuring they obtain and retain all the information required to support non-default values in their BER.</p> <p>Homeowners are investing heavily in retrofit, so it is very important that, where there is adequate information to support non-defaults, they are used in the BER. BER assessors should also advise their clients of this to ensure they are getting the best BER possible for their dwelling.</p>
Q32	<i>What do you do when a default value has to be used for an element due to insufficient evidence (e.g. windows)? The advisory report will recommend an upgrade that the Homeowner has already upgraded, but that are just unable to substantiate.</i>
	The advisory report reflects what information has been entered into DEAP. It is possible to suppress a recommendation, where you feel the recommendation is not appropriate for the particular dwelling.
Queries Regarding Generating the Updated Advisory Report	
Q33	<i>Will dwellings with a large living area percentage prevent target BER's from being achieved?</i>
	Dwellings with a large living area percentage will typically have a slightly worse BER, but it will not prevent the minimum BER from being achieved. The target BER is not mandatory, and it may not be possible to achieve it in all cases. More information is available within Section 2 of the Advisory Report Guidance Document available here .
Q34	<i>Is there a sample survey that could be made available to BER assessors to assist them in getting used to the updated advisory report? For example, as a learning tool?</i>
	Within the updated advisory report, it is possible to generate draft advisory reports without publishing them. Generating drafts will provide you with the opportunity to try out different options for any DEAP assessment you have completed. More information is available within the Advisory Report Guidance Document available here .
Q35	<i>Has there been any information collected on the extra time required to prepare the updated advisory report versus the old version?</i>
	<p>The updated advisory report was made available to a small group of BER assessors at the end of 2020, to test the advisory report builder and to provide feedback on the process of generating an advisory report.</p> <p>Within its development it was also designed to be intuitive in terms of the number of 'clicks' required to generate a final report. No feedback was provided on the time or effort taken to generate a copy of the updated advisory report, however if you do have any further feedback or comments on this matter, please forward this to us via the BER Helpdesk.</p>
Queries Regarding Upgrades and Uplift Measures within the Advisory Report Builder	
Q36	<i>Why is the ceiling insulation upgrade only to U=0.16 when 300mm of fibre in total defaults to 0.13?</i>
	As part of future developments for the advisory report builder, we are planning to include further options for roof upgrades, which would be more advanced than 0.13 W/m ² K
Q37	<i>Why are the upgrade values based on numeric choices? And not for example, '100mm foil-backed PIR'?</i>
	The recommendations in the advisory report are based on the BER inputs and it may not be appropriate to specify insulation based on the U-value or wall type selected in the BER assessment. Also, there may be a mix of wall types in the dwelling that would require different insulation types. The recommended U-value is provided for the homeowner and the homeowner's contractor/advisor can recommend the most appropriate way to achieve that U-value.
Q38	<i>In relation to the fabric first approach, at what point of fabric upgrades does it introduce advice on mechanical ventilation? Is that an assessor driven input?</i>

	Mechanical ventilation is not selected by default in the advisory report builder. This can be selected by the assessor as an additional measure if appropriate.
Q39	<i>Can you complete a new advisory report on dwelling which will be extended in addition to a retrofit?</i>
	The advisory report is generated based on the dwelling as inputted in DEAP. It would be possible to complete a 'design-stage' DEAP assessment of the dwelling including the proposed extension and generating a draft advisory report for the homeowner without first publishing the BER.
Q40	<i>On potential heating upgrades, can you select water heating with a hot water heat pump in addition to an air-to-air heat pump?</i>
	Currently this is not possible. When selecting the air-to-air heat pump, the builder will assume electric immersion heater to heat the domestic hot water. We can add further heat pump options for assessors in the future if requested.
Q41	<i>For the windows, is there any mention of the g value? A window upgrade with a higher u value may have an overall energy performance that is worse than a poorer window with a high g value?</i>
	Currently a g-value of 0.63 is assumed for all window upgrades in the builder.
Q42	<i>Can the advisory builder automatically bring the HLI down to 2 when heat pump is selected?</i>
	No, you must select fabric upgrade measures to improve the HLI.
Q43	<i>Why is there no mention to look at thermal bridging in the advisory report?</i>
	The advisory report is a first step for homeowners to assist them with engaging with a retrofit professional. It was important to provide enough information to homeowners to allow them to start those discussions, while avoiding getting too technical. The advisory report refers homeowners to the Building Regulations and SR 54:2014 Code of Practice for Energy Efficient Retrofit - both of which include requirements/guidance in relation to thermal bridging. Their advisor/contractor should also advise them on reducing heat loss due to thermal bridging.
Q44	<i>Is thermal mass altered based on measures selected?</i>
	No, thermal mass is not altered based on measures selected.
Q45	<i>How should we decide whether to select the minimum or maximum upgrade options for a house?</i>
	This depends on what the client is interested in and also, the purpose for the rating. If for example, the homeowner is selling the house, it may be appropriate to publish the report with the default selection of upgrades. If your client intends to carry out a retrofit, they may request you to explore different options to achieve a B2 for example.
Q46	<i>If the assessor is following the cost optimal measures and only achieving a B3, will this be a problem when generating the Advisory Report?</i>
	No this should not be a problem. While the target BER is a B2 in most cases, it is not necessary to achieve the target rating. In order to publish the report, the uplift must meet the minimum rating and the minimum rating is conservative. More information is available within the Advisory Report Guidance Document available here .
Q47	<i>When you have U-Value's that are between 2 values, is the 'energy efficiency' description of poor, fair, good etc. area weighted for the particular property being assessed or just based on the two values regardless of the area that has the higher u-value?</i>
	This is done on an area-weighted basis.
Q48	<i>If selecting a window upgrade, does it automatically assume all windows are being upgraded? In some cases, there may only be a need to upgrade some windows to meet HLI, but will the report assume all windows are being upgraded?</i>
	A window upgrade (double glazing – 1.4W/m ² K) will be available if there are any windows in the dwelling with a U-value of more than 1.49 W/m ² K. The window upgrade will only be applied to the windows with a U-value higher than 1.49 W/m ² K.
Q49	<i>Is there guidance on type of heat pump selection based on the property? (e.g. for a mid-floor apartment) Are all types of heat pumps appropriate? Air to Air, Air to water etc?</i>
	They are all available for selection. The assessor must select the most appropriate type. It should also be noted that while the heat pump is selected by default for upgrades for a dwelling, it can be deselected if a heat pump installation is not appropriate